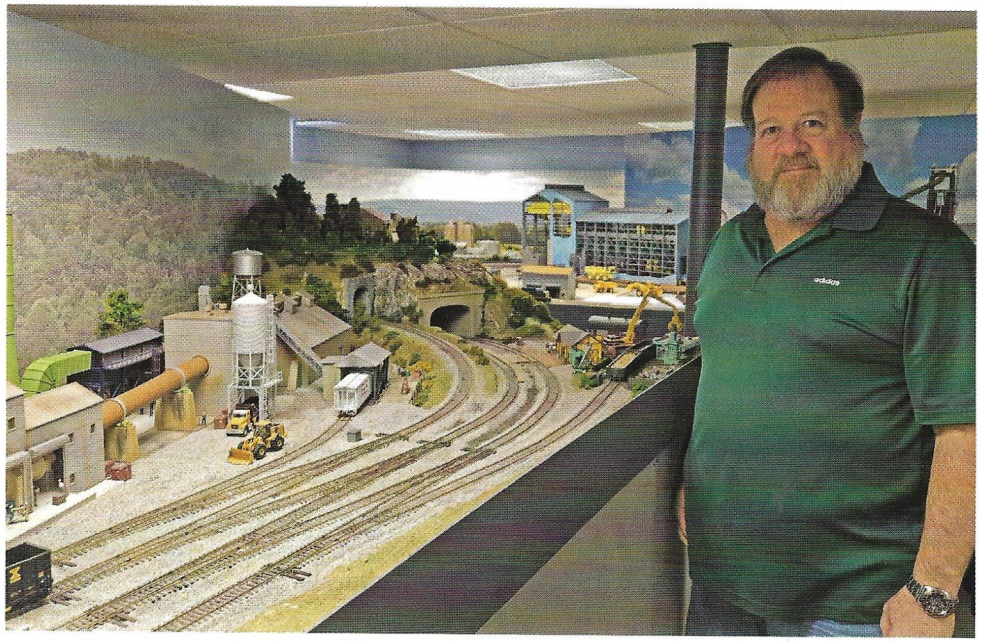
Phillip Burnside
Earns
Master Model Railroader® #754



I started building wooden craftsmen kits with my father in the 1970s. We lived in Baltimore, Maryland, and had a small, 5x10-foot layout in the basement. Modeling trains was our shared hobby, and the layout was mostly the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. I developed a lot of my modeling skills as a member of the Baltimore Society of Model Engineers, which I joined in 1978.

Due to space limitations during my young adult years, I spent a lot of time photographing prototype trains and building models of cars and engines. Because my work took me to many locations, I photographed trains whenever and wherever possible. Many of my photographs will be listed if you "Google" my name. But still no layout for me at this point.

I got into steel mill modeling in 2000 after I got a chance to go through the U.S. Steel Edgar Thomson Works and take pictures of the major parts of the mill. Based on this new area of interest, I started purchasing the appropriate Walthers kits and trying to add more detail to them based on my photographs. The blast furnace model I built moved from Pittsburgh to California to my present home.

Eventually, I moved to the central Indiana area, close enough to the Big Four Yard in Avon that I could hear it from my home.

In 2010, I bought a large home with a basement and an attached apartment. In 2011, my father moved to Avon to live with us and joined me in building our first large layout that eventually took over the entire basement. The track even goes behind our washer and dryer. It includes a cement plant, coal mine, farm, town, a rolling mill (based on the mill in Irwin, Pennsylvania), the Clairton coke works, the Edgar Thomson steel mill, the Conneaut ore docks, and an ore boat (the SS Arthur M. Anderson).

At the same time, I got into 3D-printing to build models of items not commercially available in kits. I started by printing a lot of small items for details. In those days, 3D-printers were expensive, and the smaller ones were the only option for home use.

In 2015, I became a board member of the new Steel Mill Modelers Special Interest Group (SIG). For my first highly detailed project, I built an animated model of the blowing engines used to push high volumes of air into the blast furnace. I entered it into the 2016 NMRA National Convention model contest, and it became my first merit award-winning model. The model also won the NMRA Dean Freytag industrial structure award. That same year, my 3D-printed model of an electric shunt locomotive won first place in the diesel and other locomotives category, as well as the Bachmann Innovation award. Attending my first national convention and winning these awards set me on the road to Master Model Railroader®.

That year's convention also included our home on the layout tours, and more than 75 visitors came to our house by bus.

I ran into problems with 3D-printing because it was difficult for some people to accept these models as scratchbuilt, which needed recognition for the personal effort and skills involved in making a model this way. There was quite a learning curve and prejudices to overcome. Sometimes I had to be patient, and sometimes I had to go to other Regions for judging, but I persevered. Over time and with expanding knowledge, 3D-printed models became accepted by the majority of the NMRA community.

In 2017, the Steel Mill Modelers held its annual meet in Merrillville, Indiana. One of the hotel's guests just happened to be a Nucor Steel executive, and he saw our banner on the other side of the lobby area. He approached our then-president, Bill Wolf, which began a new relationship for the SIG. Nucor asked us to create a model of its Crawfordsville, Indiana, plant and allowed me to visit the plant to photograph the equipment and facilities. That collaboration resulted in a 16-foot model that traveled to Rapid City, South Dakota; Kent, Ohio; the plant and museum in Crawfordsville; and the 2018 NMRA National Convention in Kansas City, where it won the Merit Award and Fantasonics Engineering "Model Most Deserving of Sound" award.

The Nucor project also resulted in a book. I thought it would just be articles for the *Steel Mill Modelers Journal,* but there was too much information. As a result, I wrote the *Modern Steel Mini-Mill Details for the Modeler.* My wife did the editing and graphics layout, so it became a labor of love.

I finished my seventh and eighth Certificates by taking 13 cars and four locomotives to the 2023 NCR Convention in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. I plan to complete all 11 Certificates.

I am still on the Board of the Steel Mill Modelers, and I also serve as the Paymaster for the CID of the NMRA. I am also a Board Member At Large for the Midwest Region.

I often write articles for the Steel Mill Modeler SIG quarterly Journal, and these articles include my 3D creations so others can see how things are built. My wife is the editor and graphic designer. She had to add

me as the "technical advisor" because she does not speak railroad. We now have the time to travel and aim to take as many train and industrial photographs as possible.

I am still working, and my duties include mentoring young engineers as they learn to apply the skills they acquired in college to real-world situations. I intend to do the same for new modelers as they learn not only model railroading, but also master modeling skills.

Certificates Earned
Phillip Burnside, MMR® #754

Master Builder – Cars
Master Builder - Structures
Master Builder - Scenery
Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical
Chief Dispatcher
Association Volunteer
Model Railroad Author